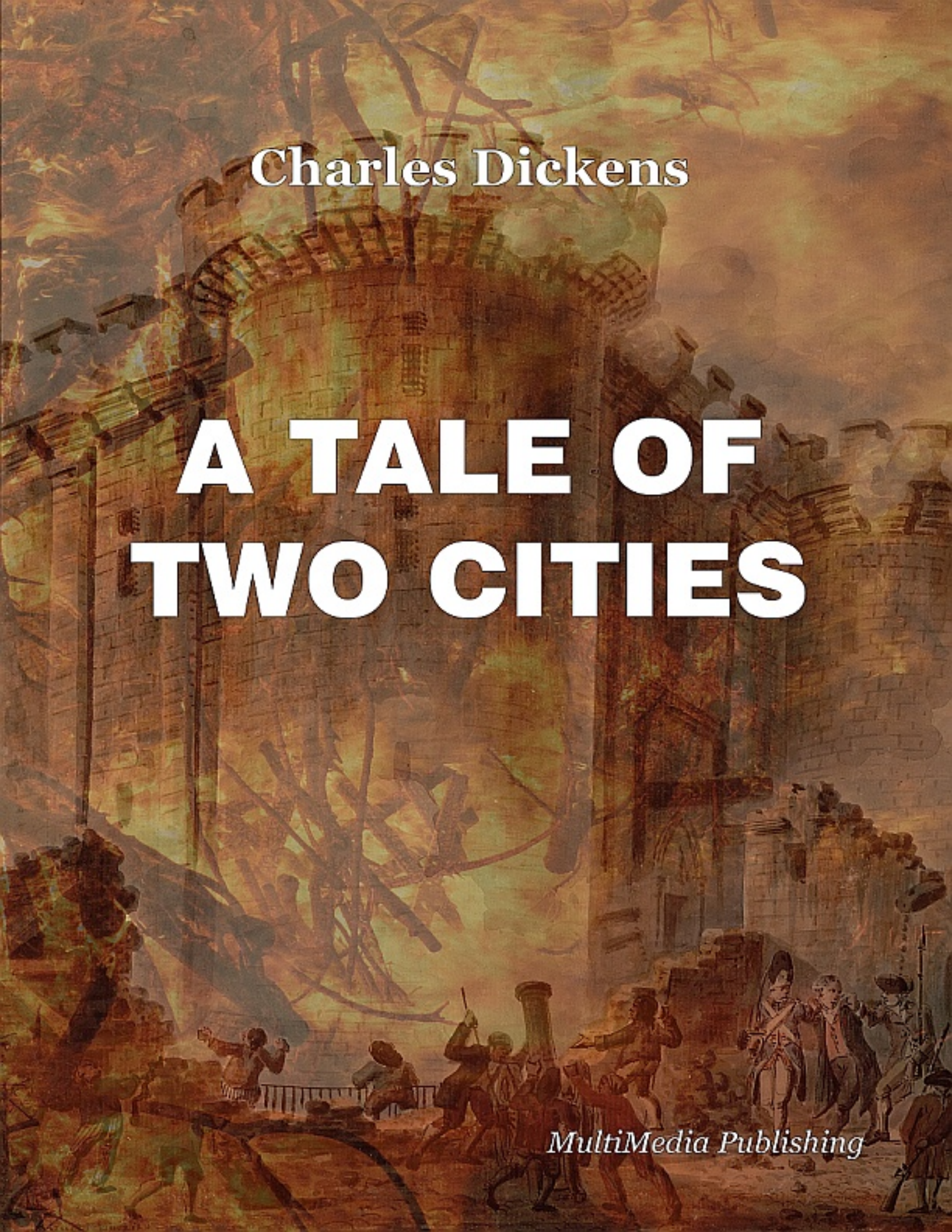


The background of the cover is a detailed, painterly illustration in a warm, sepia-toned palette. It depicts a scene of urban warfare and destruction. In the center, a large, multi-story stone building is engulfed in intense orange and yellow flames. Scaffolding and wooden beams are visible within the burning structure. In the foreground, a group of men in 18th-century attire are engaged in various activities: some are running, others are fighting with swords and pistols, and one man in the lower center is being carried on a stretcher. To the right, a man in a military-style uniform with a bicorne hat stands observing. The sky is filled with smoke and the glow of fire, creating a sense of chaos and devastation.

Charles Dickens

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

MultiMedia Publishing

A Tale of Two Cities

Revolution and Redemption

BOOK PREVIEW

Charles Dickens

Published by MultiMedia Publishing

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CHARLES DICKENS: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

MultiMedia Publishing, <https://www.telework.ro/en/publishing/>

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A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens, with the original illustrations

Introductions and Notes by Andrew Lang.

Revolution and Redemption: A Comprehensive Exploration of Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities", by © 2025 Nicolae Sfetcu

The cover includes a cropped and modified image of the painting *Prise de la Bastille* by Jean-Pierre-Louis-Laurent Houel

ISBN 978-606-033-921-2

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Original edition:

London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons

1898

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INTRODUCTION

Probably Dickens never wrote a more popular book (unless *Pickwick* is the exception) than his *Tale of Two Cities*. Among readers whom Nature has made incapable (to their pride and loss) of appreciating Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Gamp, and all our dearest friends, the *Tale of Two Cities* is admired. Meanwhile the lovers of the old irresponsible humour and high spirits of Dickens's earlier days must admit that the *Tale* is an historical melodrama of unrivalled vividness and power. It is a book that will not allow itself to be forgotten, with its refrain of trampling multitudinous feet, and its melancholy figure of Sydney Carton.

The French Revolution has been a fertile but not a fortunate field for novelists. Scott justly observed, about some other historical events, that they are, in themselves, too strong for romantic treatment. Nothing can add to the native romance of the conquest of Anahuac by Cortés; fancy lags in the trail of fact. The poignancy and horror of the Revolution outdo all mere imaginative effort to cope with them: it is Nature that here purges by pity and terror, that distracts our sympathies, and finally leaves us in an impotent anger against the shiftless party which fell, and the fiendish party which triumphed in that fall, and then turned its fangs against itself. We are too near that chaldron of Medea, too near its brink ourselves, for the existence of a merely artistic interest. Therefore even the great Dumas did not succeed in this field, as he did in fields more remote, and among catastrophes less cosmical. Dickens has, probably, the advantage here over that renowned master of France; his English background aids him, by affording relief. Doubtless this is the best novel of the Revolution, and the best of Dickens's novels which venture into history.

On one point, historical accuracy, not very much need be said. Dickens, in a letter to Bulwer Lytton, shows that he was quite familiar with the scientifically historical view of his topic. "Enquiries and figures" regarding the precise social condition of the peasantry might prove this or that, on the whole, but examples of oppression were recent enough, and common enough (he held), to justify the use which he made of them in fiction. We must beware of checking the fancy of the novelist by pedantic restrictions—pedantic because out of place. The historical novelist is not the historian. Mr. Freeman has been severe on *Ivanhoe* for want of congruity with facts. *Kenilworth* and *Peperil of the Peak* present characters dead long before the tale begins—or at that time children, though they figure as grown men. In Thackeray's splendid picture of the King, in *Esmond*, there is hardly one line or touch of colour consistent with historical verity. This is hard on the character, and Dickens's wicked Marquis may be hard on his order. "It is not unreasonable or unallowable to suppose a nobleman wedded to the old cruel ideas," says Dickens to Lytton, and, in romance, it is doubtless allowable. He might have added that, in the Marquis de Sade, a real contemporary, the bestial Gilles de Raiz of 1440 was actually reincarnated, and was not burned, nor even guillotined, while so many innocent heads were falling. The Bastille, by the time it was destroyed, was as obsolete almost for its old purposes, and nearly as empty, as the cave of Giant Pagan, in Bunyan. But in a curious wandering book, the "Letters" of Oliver Macallister, we read of horrors worse than Dickens could invent—the black dungeons of Galbanon, where men's lives were one long noisome torture; where prisoners disappeared for ever, none knew how or why, none dared to ask. Macallister, a *mouton*, or prison spy, causes, despite his verbose futile digressions, a shudder which cannot be forgotten. The date of his experiences was 1755–1760, sufficiently near the period of the novel for the purposes of fiction. The pressure of taxation, its most unequal pressure, is undeniable, while the results were wasted in the way with which we are

familiar. Dickens cites Mercier's *Tableau de Paris* as authority for his bad Marquis, though he does not tell us what were the *Quellen* of Mercier. Indeed, we need not ask. The question is not whether the stories are true, but whether, like the blood-baths of Louis XV., the stories were believed. India is full of such myths about ourselves, as mediæval Europe was full of them about the Jews. The historian examines the facts: to the novelist is permitted a larger liberty. As an old critic justly puts it, the novelist is "the landscape gardener of history." Rousseau is cited by Dickens for "the peasant's shutting up his house when he had a bit of meat." We may, of course, say that the Revolution did not greatly benefit the peasant, or anybody. That is rather an extreme opinion. Certainly the peasant escaped from the element of tyrannical personal caprice. Revolutions never produce a millennium, but they gratify the passion of revenge, and they shift and modify grievances. The sick world gets such relief as a fevered man obtains from turning in his bed.

The *Tale of Two Cities* was the next in sequence after *Little Dorrit*, and though so vastly superior to that work in vividness, concentration, and construction, was written in unhappy circumstances. The author and his wife had separated, and a dispute about the publication of a statement on this topic by Dickens led to the abandonment of *Household Words*. From Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, its publishers, Dickens went back to his old allies, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, never to leave them again. He established *All the Year Round*, practically the old periodical under a new name. And here, though not very relevantly, one may observe that "household words" was a household word, or proverbial phrase, before Shakespeare's day. Randolph, the ambassador of Queen Elizabeth in Scotland (1565), talks of "household words, as poor men use to say," in one of his despatches.

In *All the Year Round* the new story was published. The germ of the idea, "a vague fancy," had occurred to Dickens when acting with his friends and children, in Wilkie Collins's *Frozen Deep*, during the summer of 1857. In the end of January, 1858, he reverted to the notion, partly because work at a story would relieve his "worried mind." A number of titles were thought of: *Buried Alive*; *The Thread of Gold*, or *The Doctor of Beauvais*; but it was in March, 1859, that he decided on *A Tale of Two Cities*. He meant to put the story into his magazine, and also, for another public, into monthly numbers. His purpose was that the legend should express the characters more than they should express themselves in dialogue—"a story of incident pounding the characters in its own mortar, and beating their interest out of them." Seldom, indeed, have fictitious characters been more severely "pounded." As Mr. Forster says, Dickens does rely more on incident than character; but perhaps it would be as true to say that he drops that surplussage of description of character, and that Carlylean trick of iteration played on some personal feature, as on Pancks's snort or Carker's teeth. Most in his regular manner are the bullying Stryver, and the Resurrectionist. The humour of Jerry's remarks on the barbarity of quartering a criminal, because it spoils a "subject," are exactly in the manner of Dennis, the hangman, in *Barnaby Rudge*. Mr. Forster, usually a most lenient critic, thinks Dickens's experiment "hardly successful," from the absence of humour, and of "rememberable figures." But it is not well to be humorous in scenes of oppression, popular or patrician; while Dr. Manette, and Sydney Carton, and Mr. Stryver, and Madame Defarge are surely characters memorable enough. Carton has been argued against, as not a plausible character, and, in the nature of the case, he is not a usual character. But there is nothing impossible, or gravely improbable, in him. He does not set a pin's fee on a life which he has wrecked, and lacks the energy to rebuild. He has a great passion; "greater love has no man than this, that a man should give his life for his friend." He makes a noble end of a wasted existence, as he might do, under the stress of his affection for Mrs. Darnay, and perhaps more tears have been

shed over Sydney Carton than over any personage in Dickens's novels. Nobody need grudge them to the school-fellow of Mr. Stryver, whose last scene is in a high degree pathetic, yet not melodramatic. There were too many such farewells to life, when the mob had its will and its way.

According to the right rule of historical fiction, the characters are unhistorical. "The domestic life of a few simple private people is so knitted and interwoven with the outbreak of a terrible public event, that the one seems but part of the other." Dickens does not give us long chapters of actual history. He could have introduced the real people—the King, Danton, Robespierre, St. Just; and Dumas or Scott would probably have done so, with good effect. But the more modest plan is the safer, and, as the example proves, not the less interesting. The Revolution exists, so to say, for the story. Even that gallant feat, the storming of a scarcely defended castle, is described because of its necessity to the plot; the Doctor's manuscript, concealed in No. 105, North Tower, has to be discovered by Defarge. The novel does rather suggest that the Bastille was assaulted mainly for that purpose, and that the Revolution was chiefly caused by the vintner's wife, "to serve her private ends." The conditions, or some of them, which nourished the bacillus of revolt, are described, however, in earlier chapters, consistently with what Dickens calls "the philosophy of Mr. Carlyle's wonderful book." With similar skill the September massacres are not dragged in, for the mere sake of description, but are of moment to the conduct of the story. It were hypercritical to object to the coincidence whereby the spies, whom we first met in England, meet and are mastered by Carton at the nick of time. Such allowances are the common right of novelists. Indeed, when Dickens, writing to Monsieur Regnier of the *Comédie Française*, called this book "the best story I have written," his self-criticism was just. It is the best *charpenté* of his tales up to that date; the most compact, and the most lucid in its development. Excellence in construction had not hitherto been his *forte*, partly because his tales had too many interests, in which that of plot was apt to be obscured and overlaid by a mass of heterogeneous detail. In this instance, just because the characters were to be "pounded out" by circumstance, all lies clear before the eye of author and reader.

Throughout the novel, the scenes, as described, reach a high level of vision, whether they are cast in London or in Paris. Mr. Forster, in his *Life of Dickens*, is annoyed with Mr. Lewes's criticisms on Dickens's power of vision. They are expressed, perhaps, rather pedantically, and in the terminology of psychological science, which seems to have been hardly intelligible to Mr. Forster. Vividness of conception, almost amounting to hallucination, is decidedly a form of genius. In Goethe's case, both in scientific and personal thought, conception externalised itself as hallucination. He would think of the girl of the hour "till she actually came to meet me," he told Eckermann. To possess this vigour of *phantasia*, and to communicate it in a secondary degree to the reader (as Dickens here does in a score of splendid passages), is to give proof demonstrable of the highest romantic genius. Lewes was paying a tribute to Dickens with one hand, while taking it away with the other, when he called the characters "wooden." They are anything but wooden, as a rule, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, though, in places, the humour of Jerry may be censured as verbal, or mechanical. "Hallucination will never account for it," cries Mr. Forster, apparently regarding "hallucination" as synonymous with mental aberration. This is what comes of introducing scientific technical language into literary criticism. Dickens said, "I don't invent, really do not, but *see*," thus attesting the correctness of Mr. Lewes's diagnosis. But "the mechanism of genius" is an obscure topic: we ordinary minds may be grateful for the results of processes whereof we have no personal experience. Dickens wrote to Lytton that he "never gave way to his invention recklessly, but constantly restrained it; and, of course, he occasionally failed in restraint. His invention did

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not often present him with a *jeune première* of great interest, and the heroine of *A Tale of Two Cities* is even as most heroines of male novelists. The turn which makes Miss Pross an accidental avenging angel, was censured, as if Dickens, here, had not restrained his invention. But he justly replied that he wished to contrast Madame Defarge's mean death in a grotesque scuffle, with the stately and honourable death of Carton. The grim ingenuity of the device by which Jerry learns that Cly is not dead, accounts for the introduction of a character common enough, at the time and much later, the Resurrectionist. That a man in his position should practise this by-work, is, it must be admitted, not very probable.

Dickens sent the proofs of the story to M. Regnier, to be dramatised. But the censure, as M. Regnier saw, would have replied—

"Incedis per ignes

Suppositos cineri doloso."

ANDREW LANG

PREFACE

When I was acting, with my children and friends, in Mr. Wilkie Collins's drama of *The Frozen Deep*, I first conceived the main idea of this story. A strong desire was upon me then, to embody it in my own person; and I traced out in my fancy, the state of mind of which it would necessitate the presentation to an observant spectator, with particular care and interest.

As the idea became familiar to me, it gradually shaped itself into its present form. Throughout its execution, it has had complete possession of me; I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages, as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself.

Whenever any reference (however slight) is made here to the condition of the French people before or during the Revolution, it is truly made, on the faith of trustworthy witnesses. It has been one of my hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr. Carlyle's wonderful book.

BOOK THE FIRST. RECALLED TO LIFE.

CHAPTER I. THE PERIOD.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face, on the throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face, on the throne of France. In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the Cock-lane ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (supernaturally deficient in originality) rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the earthly order of events had lately come to the English Crown and People, from a congress of British subjects in America: which, strange to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock-lane brood.

France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual than her sister of the shield and trident, rolled with exceeding smoothness down hill, making paper money and spending it. Under the guidance of her Christian pastors, she entertained herself, besides, with such humane achievements as sentencing a youth to have his hands cut off, his tongue torn out with pincers, and his body burned alive, because he had not kneeled down in the rain to do honour to a dirty procession of monks which passed within his view, at a distance of some fifty or sixty yards. It is likely enough that, rooted in the woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history. It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts, bespattered with rustic mire, snuffed about by pigs, and roosted in by poultry, which the Farmer, Death, had already set apart to be his tumbrils of the Revolution. But that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that they were awake, was to be atheistical and traitorous.

In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to justify much national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night; families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security; the highwayman in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognised and challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of "the Captain," gallantly shot him through the head and rode away; the mail was waylaid by seven robbers, and the guard shot three dead, and then got shot dead himself by the other four, "in consequence of the failure of his ammunition:" after which the mail was robbed in peace; that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand and deliver on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the illustrious creature in sight of all his retinue; prisoners in London gaols fought battles with their turnkeys, and the majesty of the law fired blunderbusses in among them, loaded with rounds of shot and ball; thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at Court drawing-rooms; musketeers went into St. Giles's, to search for contraband goods, and the mob fired on the musketeers, and the musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of these occurrences much out of the common way. In the midst of them, the hangman, ever busy and ever worse than useless, was in constant requisition; now, stringing up long rows of miscellaneous criminals; now, hanging a housebreaker on Saturday who had been taken on Tuesday; now, burning people in the hand at Newgate by the dozen, and now burning pamphlets at the door of Westminster Hall; to-day, taking the life of an atrocious murderer, and to-morrow of a wretched pilferer who had robbed a farmer's boy of sixpence.

All these things, and a thousand like them, came to pass in and close upon the dear old year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Environed by them, while the Woodman and the Farmer worked unheeded, those two of the large jaws, and those other two of the plain and the fair faces, trod with stir enough, and carried their divine rights with a high hand. Thus did the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five conduct their Greatnesses, and myriads of small creatures—the creatures of this chronicle among the rest—along the roads that lay before them.

CHAPTER II. THE MAIL.

It was the Dover road that lay, on a Friday night late in November, before the first of the persons with whom this history has business. The Dover road lay, as to him, beyond the Dover mail, as it lumbered up Shooter's Hill. He walked uphill in the mire by the side of the mail, as the rest of the passengers did; not because they had the least relish for walking exercise, under the circumstances, but because the hill, and the harness, and the mud, and the mail, were all so heavy, that the horses had three times already come to a stop, besides once drawing the coach across the road, with the mutinous intent of taking it back to Blackheath. Reins and whip and coachman and guard, however, in combination, had read that article of war which forbade a purpose otherwise strongly in favour of the argument, that some brute animals are endued with Reason; and the team had capitulated and returned to their duty.

With drooping heads and tremulous tails, they mashed their way through the thick mud, floundering and stumbling between whiles, as if they were falling to pieces at the larger joints. As often as the driver rested them and brought them to a stand, with a wary "Wo-ho! so-ho then!" the near leader violently shook his head and everything upon it—like an unusually emphatic horse, denying that the coach could be got up the hill. Whenever the leader made this rattle, the passenger started, as a nervous passenger might, and was disturbed in mind.

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There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding none. A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do. It was dense enough to shut out everything from the light of the coach-lamps but these its own workings, and a few yards of road; and the reek of the labouring horses steamed into it, as if they had made it all.

Two other passengers, besides the one, were plodding up the hill by the side of the mail. All three were wrapped to the cheek-bones and over the ears, and wore jack-boots. Not one of the three could have said, from anything he saw, what either of the other two was like; and each was hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind, as from the eyes of the body, of his two companions. In those days, travellers were very shy of being confidential on a short notice, for anybody on the road might be a robber or in league with robbers. As to the latter, when every posting-house and ale-house could produce somebody in "the Captain's" pay, ranging from the landlord to the lowest stable nondescript, it was the likeliest thing upon the cards. So the guard of the Dover mail thought to himself, that Friday night in November, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, lumbering up Shooter's Hill, as he stood on his own particular perch behind the mail, beating his feet, and keeping an eye and a hand on the arm-chest before him, where a loaded blunderbuss lay at the top of six or eight loaded horse-pistols, deposited on a substratum of cutlass.

The Dover mail was in its usual genial position that the guard suspected the passengers, the passengers suspected one another and the guard, they all suspected everybody else, and the coachman was sure of nothing but the horses; as to which cattle he could with a clear conscience have taken his oath on the two Testaments that they were not fit for the journey.

"Wo-ho!" said the coachman. "So, then! One more pull and you're at the top and be damned to you, for I have had trouble enough to get you to it!—Joe!"

"Halloa!" the guard replied.

"What o'clock do you make it, Joe?"

"Ten minutes, good, past eleven."

"My blood!" ejaculated the vexed coachman, "and not atop of Shooter's yet! Tst! Yah! Get on with you!"

The emphatic horse, cut short by the whip in a most decided negative, made a decided scramble for it, and the three other horses followed suit. Once more, the Dover mail struggled on, with the jack-boots of its passengers squashing along by its side. They had stopped when the coach stopped, and they kept close company with it. If any one of the three had had the hardihood to propose to another to walk on a little ahead into the mist and darkness, he would have put himself in a fair way of getting shot instantly as a highwayman.

The last burst carried the mail to the summit of the hill. The horses stopped to breathe again, and the guard got down to skid the wheel for the descent, and open the coach-door to let the passengers in.

"Tst! Joe!" cried the coachman in a warning voice, looking down from his box.

"What do you say, Tom?"

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They both listened.

"I say a horse at a canter coming up, Joe."

"I say a horse at a gallop, Tom," returned the guard, leaving his hold of the door, and mounting nimbly to his place. "Gentlemen! In the king's name, all of you!"

With this hurried adjuration, he cocked his blunderbuss, and stood on the offensive.

The passenger booked by this history, was on the coach-step, getting in; the two other passengers were close behind him, and about to follow. He remained on the step, half in the coach and half out of it; they remained in the road below him. They all looked from the coachman to the guard, and from the guard to the coachman, and listened. The coachman looked back and the guard looked back, and even the emphatic leader pricked up his ears and looked back, without contradicting.

The stillness consequent on the cessation of the rumbling and labouring of the coach, added to the stillness of the night, made it very quiet indeed. The panting of the horses communicated a tremulous motion to the coach, as if it were in a state of agitation. The hearts of the passengers beat loud enough perhaps to be heard; but at any rate, the quiet pause was audibly expressive of people out of breath, and holding the breath, and having the pulses quickened by expectation.

The sound of a horse at a gallop came fast and furiously up the hill.

"So-ho!" the guard sang out, as loud as he could roar. "Yo there! Stand! I shall fire!"

The pace was suddenly checked, and, with much splashing and floundering, a man's voice called from the mist, "Is that the Dover mail?"

"Never you mind what it is?" the guard retorted. "What are you?"

"Is that the Dover mail?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I want a passenger, if it is."

"What passenger?"

"Mr. Jarvis Lorry."

Our booked passenger showed in a moment that it was his name. The guard, the coachman, and the two other passengers eyed him distrustfully.

"Keep where you are," the guard called to the voice in the mist, "because, if I should make a mistake, it could never be set right in your lifetime. Gentleman of the name of Lorry answer straight."

"What is the matter?" asked the passenger, then, with mildly quavering speech. "Who wants me? Is it Jerry?"

("I don't like Jerry's voice, if it is Jerry," growled the guard to himself. "He's hoarser than suits me, is Jerry.")

"Yes, Mr. Lorry."

"What is the matter?"

"A despatch sent after you from over yonder. T. and Co."



The Mail

"I know this messenger, guard," said Mr. Lorry, getting down into the road—assisted from behind more swiftly than politely by the other two passengers, who immediately scrambled into the coach, shut the door, and pulled up the window. "He may come close; there's nothing wrong."

"I hope there ain't, but I can't make so 'Nation sure of that," said the guard, in gruff soliloquy. "Hallo you!"

"Well! And hallo you!" said Jerry, more hoarsely than before.

"Come on at a footpace! d'ye mind me? And if you've got holsters to that saddle o' yourn, don't let me see your hand go nigh 'em. For I'm a devil at a quick mistake, and when I make one it takes the form of Lead. So now let's look at you."

The figures of a horse and rider came slowly through the eddying mist, and came to the side of the mail, where the passenger stood. The rider stooped, and, casting up his eyes at the guard, handed the passenger a small folded paper. The rider's horse was blown, and both horse and rider were covered with mud, from the hoofs of the horse to the hat of the man.

"Guard!" said the passenger, in a tone of quiet business confidence.

The watchful guard, with his right hand at the stock of his raised blunderbuss, his left at the barrel, and his eye on the horseman, answered curtly, "Sir."

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"There is nothing to apprehend. I belong to Tellson's Bank. You must know Tellson's Bank in London. I am going to Paris on business. A crown to drink. I may read this?"

"If so be as you're quick, sir."

He opened it in the light of the coach-lamp on that side, and read—first to himself and then aloud: "'Wait at Dover for Mam'selle.' It's not long, you see, guard. Jerry, say that my answer was, recalled to life."

Jerry started in his saddle. "That's a Blazing strange answer, too," said he, at his hoarsest.

"Take that message back, and they will know that I received this, as well as if I wrote. Make the best of your way. Good night."

With those words the passenger opened the coach-door and got in; not at all assisted by his fellow-passengers, who had expeditiously secreted their watches and purses in their boots, and were now making a general pretence of being asleep. With no more definite purpose than to escape the hazard of originating any other kind of action.

The coach lumbered on again, with heavier wreaths of mist closing round it as it began the descent. The guard soon replaced his blunderbuss in his arm-chest, and, having looked to the rest of its contents, and having looked to the supplementary pistols that he wore in his belt, looked to a smaller chest beneath his seat, in which there were a few smith's tools, a couple of torches, and a tinder-box. For he was furnished with that completeness that if the coach-lamps had been blown and stormed out, which did occasionally happen, he had only to shut himself up inside, keep the flint and steel sparks well off the straw, and get a light with tolerable safety and ease (if he were lucky) in five minutes.

"Tom!" softly over the coach-roof.

"Hallo, Joe."

"Did you hear the message?"

"I did, Joe."

"What did you make of it, Tom?"

"Nothing at all, Joe."

"That's a coincidence, too," the guard mused, "for I made the same of it myself."

Jerry, left alone in the mist and darkness, dismounted meanwhile, not only to ease his spent horse, but to wipe the mud from his face, and shake the wet out of his hat-brim, which might be capable of holding about half a gallon. After standing with the bridle over his heavily-splashed arm, until the wheels of the mail were no longer within hearing and the night was quite still again, he turned to walk down the hill.

"After that there gallop from Temple Bar, old lady, I won't trust your fore-legs till I get you on the level," said this hoarse messenger, glancing at his mare. "'Recalled to life.' That's a Blazing strange message. Much of that wouldn't do for you, Jerry! I say, Jerry! You'd be in a Blazing bad way, if recalling to life was to come into fashion, Jerry!"

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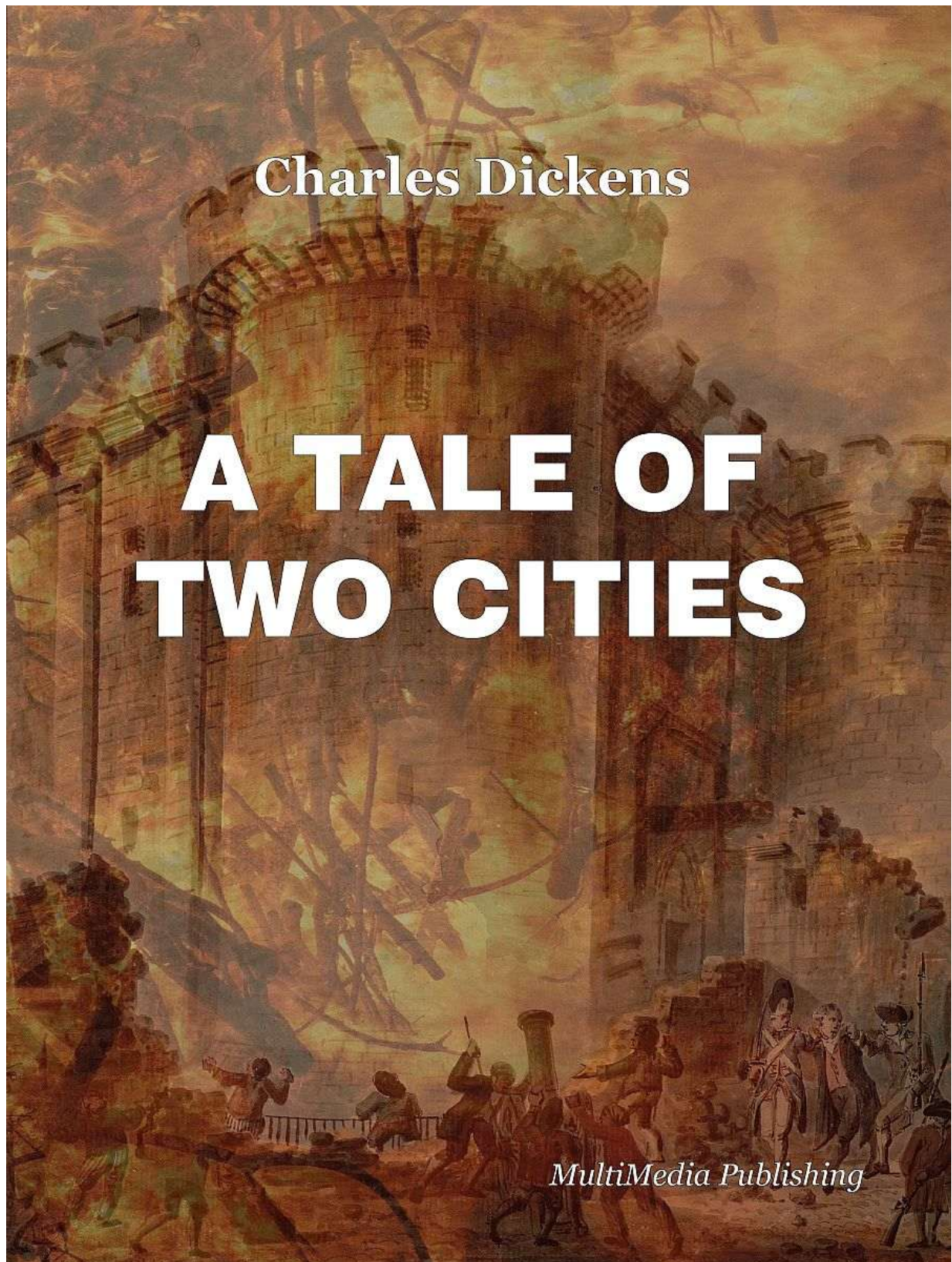
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Notes

CHARLES DICKENS: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Book



A timeless classic of revolution, sacrifice, and redemption

Why Read ‘A Tale of Two Cities’?

- One of the most beloved historical novels of all time
- A gripping story set during the French Revolution
- A powerful exploration of justice, love, and sacrifice
- Memorable characters, including Sydney Carton and Madame Defarge
- A novel that remains relevant today

A Timeless Story

- *“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”*
- A tale of two cities: London and Paris
- The struggle between oppression and freedom
- Themes of duality, fate, and personal redemption

Engaging Plot and Memorable Characters

- *Dr. Alexandre Manette*: A prisoner of the Bastille, struggling to reclaim his life
- *Lucie Manette*: The heart of the story, symbolizing love and hope
- *Charles Darnay*: A man torn between family legacy and personal values
- *Sydney Carton*: A tragic hero who finds redemption through sacrifice
- *Madame Defarge*: The embodiment of revenge and justice

Major Themes

- **Resurrection & Redemption**: “Recalled to Life” – second chances and new beginnings
- **Sacrifice & Love**: How love can lead to the ultimate sacrifice
- **Justice vs. Revenge**: The fine line between justice and uncontrolled vengeance
- **The Power of the Mob**: The unpredictable force of collective anger
- **Duality & Contrast**: Opposing forces that define the story

Why Now?

- Relevance to modern issues: political turmoil, social justice, and personal transformation
- A must-read for history lovers and literary enthusiasts
- Perfect for book clubs, schools, and individual readers
- A beautifully written novel with deep emotional impact

Special Features in This Edition

- Original illustrations for an immersive reading experience
- Insightful introductions and notes by Andrew Lang
- *Revolution and Redemption: A Comprehensive Exploration of Dickens's 'A Tale of Two Cities'* by Nicolae Sfetcu
- A beautifully designed cover inspired by the French Revolution

Experience the power of *A Tale of Two Cities* today! Don't miss out on this literary masterpiece!

Revolution and Redemption: A Comprehensive Exploration of Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities"

Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* is one of the most enduring works of nineteenth-century literature, notable for its vivid portrayal of the French Revolution and its profound insights into human nature. First published in 1859, the novel has earned a lasting place in the Western canon, and for good reason. It deftly intertwines personal stories of love, sacrifice, and redemption with the sweeping, historical backdrop of a society on the brink of violent upheaval. Below is a comprehensive review that examines the novel's setting, characters, themes, and enduring impact.

The book stands as both a gripping novel of the French Revolution and a deeply human narrative of love and sacrifice. Charles Dickens expertly merges grand historical events with intimate personal struggles, crafting a story that has enthralled generations of readers. Though it may not contain the sprawling cast or comedic extravagance of his other works, it compensates with taut plotting, powerful motifs, and a cast of characters who illustrate the novel's central conflicts between vengeance and mercy, privilege and justice, despair and hope.

Reading *A Tale of Two Cities* today offers timely reflections on how societal pressures can ignite political upheaval, how collective anger can transform into something uncontrollable, and how individual acts of kindness, devotion, and sacrifice can bring meaning—even amidst violence. This potent blend of history and humanity, delivered in Dickens's stirring prose, secures the novel's place among the greatest achievements of English literature. Whether one is drawn by the allure of historical drama or deeper moral inquiries, *A Tale of Two Cities* remains an essential read for anyone seeking to understand how hope can emerge from the shadows of devastation, and how, in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, love and sacrifice can change destinies.

Includes a review by Nicolae Sfetcu.

MultiMedia Publishing <https://www.telework.ro/en/e-books/a-tale-of-two-cities-by-charles-dickens/>

EPUB (ISBN 978-606-033-919-9), Kindle (ISBN 978-606-033-920-5), PDF (ISBN 978-606-033-921-2)

CHARLES DICKENS: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Publishing date: 27.02.2025